

It is time to address those things. The crime bill is a beginning. The earned-income tax credit is a beginning. We are making beginnings. Trying to deal with health care and giving Americans health care security, whether they've got a job or not, whether they've been sick or not, is a beginning. Every disabled person in America, every person who is now HIV positive but healthy enough to work in America, every person in this country with a small business will be advantaged if we can finally join the ranks of every other country in the world and give affordable health care to all of our people. It is also positive economics.

I met just this week, as you know, with the Prime Minister of Japan, with the Prime Minister of Canada, with the leaders of a lot of other countries. And they said, "How much money do you spend on health care?" I said, "Fifteen percent of our income." They said, "What? And how many people do you have insured?" I said, "Thirty-seven million." They said, "What?" And I said, "You know what, nobody believes we can fix it. Every time I say we're going to fix it by doing what other people have done that worked, they say, 'Oh, it's going to cost more money.'" And they say, "What?" [Laughter]

I'm telling you, folks, we have got to fix this. We can't go on spending a dime on the dollar more than any other country in the world does on paperwork in our health care system and expect to do anything but be punished for it economically and in human terms.

But beyond all that, we have got to recognize that we cannot be what we're supposed to be if children are shot with reckless abandon in our streets, if children grow up without a future, and if people go around bemoaning it but don't want to do anything about it. And the President of the United States and the United States Congress can only do so much. Some of this will have to be done community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, family by family, block by block.

But we can do it. If you leave here tonight believing anything, I want you to believe our country is on the move again. I'm telling you, those leaders of those Asian countries were exhilarated when we passed that trade agree-

ment because they thought we were going to turn away from the world and walk away. And they know now we're not. But I'll tell you something else: Everyone of them admitted that the opposition to NAFTA deserved to be honored because of the rampant insecurity of working people in every advanced country in the world. The story I had to tell here was the same story I heard from Canada, from Australia, from New Zealand, increasingly true in all of Europe, and even now coming to be true in Japan. We have got to find a way to reward people who work hard and who are competitive. And we have got to find a way to bring all of our people along.

This administration is pursuing that direction as vigorously as we know how. We are on the move. And we are going to get there if you in California, who have the largest stake in our future success, will make sure that in Washington the President has partners like Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Fairmont Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to William L. Brown, Jr., California State Assembly speaker; Clarence Clemmons, saxophonist; and Richard C. Blum, the Senator's husband. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at Our Lady Help of Christians School in Los Angeles

November 21, 1993

Thank you so much. It's wonderful to see all of you here today. I want to thank everyone who has made my visit here so wonderful so far, especially all the people in the courtyard behind us who took me through "Christmas in other Lands," gave me something to eat from every land represented. I thank you, Cardinal Mahony, for being here. I thank you, Father Santillan, for the wonderful work that you and others do at this parish and at this wonderful school. I thank you, Gloria Molina, for being my friend and the national cochair of my campaign last year. And I want to thank all the members of the various elected groups who are here today, the State offi-

cials, the local officials who care about you and your future, for joining me here today.

There are three people I want to mention who aren't here today because they're back in Washington, and I hope the Cardinal will forgive them, but the Congress is actually meeting on Sunday, only because they're trying to be home for Thanksgiving. But the Members of Congress from this area, Xavier Becerra, Lucille Roybal-Allard, and Esteban Torres all asked me to give you their love and best wishes. I thank them for their support of our administration and for their support of you.

I started out this morning in Pasadena meeting with about two dozen people who lost their homes or whose family members lost their homes in the fire. And I got this interesting little button—I don't know if you can see it—it looks almost like a stone pin from where you are, but it's actually just a button that was burned up in the fire. And a man who saved two other homes but who lost his own, found 50 of these pins. And he and his wife had them on. And from a distance I said, where did you get those pins? And he told me what they were, and he gave me one. This is just a charred reminder of the courage and the heroism of the people of this area who struggled through those terrible fires. I thank them for what they did, and I hope that their decency and courage in an emergency will inspire all the rest of us to do better everyday of our lives. I wish all of you could have been there with me at the Presbyterian church in Pasadena today to see them.

I wanted to come here today because I came here to this community during my campaign for President. I walked the streets of this community. I talked to children and adults. I talked to working people. I talked to people who didn't have work but wanted it. I talked to people who are worried about the violence and the crime, about the pressures on the families and the dangers to the children. And I want you to know that every night when I go to bed in the White House I think of the children of this country, of their future, of the dangers and the problems, of the hopes and the dreams.

We are working now in Washington to pass a bill which will make a big step toward mak-

ing our streets safer, something that Mayor Riordan ran on when he ran for mayor. If the bill passes, the crime bill, which has now passed both Houses of the Congress, we may be able to give our cities and this country up to 100,000 more law enforcement officers to protect people, to keep crime from occurring in the first place.

Thanks to your Senator Dianne Feinstein, the Senate passed a bill which will ban assault weapons and which bill ban the possession of handguns by young people. And both Houses have passed a version of what we call the Brady bill, which would make people wait 5 days before they get a handgun so we can check their criminal background, their age, their mental health history.

All these things will help. All these things will help, but in the end, my fellow Americans, we have to take our communities back community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, block by block, family by family, child by child.

Our disregard for life in this country is seen coast to coast. This morning I got up and read the Los Angeles Times and saw that a 2-year-old child was killed last night because her mother took her on an expedition in which the gang her mother was associated with got in a fight with another gang, and random shooting into their car felled no adult, just a 2-year-old innocent child. In Pasadena, which used to have a very different sort of image, they are gripped, haunted by the thought that three children were killed on Halloween—teenagers. Across the country in Baltimore, the Mayor of Baltimore told me a heart-rending story of going to the home of an 18-year-old child who made it his practice every Halloween to take little children out so that they could go trick-or-treating safely. And they were walking down a street, and across the street a 14-year-old boy and a 13-year-old boy were standing. And the 14-year-old had a gun and dared the 13-year-old to shoot across the street. And so he did and killed an older child whose only offense was that he wanted little children to be able to go out and trick-or-treat safely on Halloween.

What we want America to look like is what we see here today: the faces of these children safe and secure, learning and whole, looking

toward the future, believing in their lives, living by their values. That's what we want America to look like.

And so I tell you, we are doing everything we can to try to give you the tools you need to make your community safer. But we have to make up our mind that we will no longer tolerate children killing children, children having guns and being better armed than police officers, neighborhoods unsafe. We can do better. And we're going to have to do it for all of our people without regard to race or income or region. You deserve as much, and we have to do it.

Father Santillan mentioned Cesar Chavez. Think how horrified he would be, God rest his soul, if he were still here today to pick up the paper and read about the 2-year-old child being killed. He was a devotee of non-violence and self-sacrifice, not violence and self-indulgence.

Tomorrow we celebrate with regret the 30th anniversary of the assassination of our Nation's only Roman Catholic President, John Kennedy. Think how he would feel, after having spent his time as President reaching out to Latin America and the Alliance for Progress, reaching here at home to get our young people into the Peace Corps, trying to help improve opportunities for Americans, to think of all the horrible things that are happening to our young people in this country.

Think of how Robert Kennedy, who flew to California and helped Chavez break a 26-day fast, would feel here today. Hands bleeding from the clutches of an adoring mob at the end of this fast, Robert Kennedy said this to the farm workers those long years ago, "When your children and grandchildren take their place in America, going to high school and college and taking good jobs at good pay, when you look at them you will say"—he said to the farm workers—"‘I did this. I was there at the point of difficulty and danger.’ And though you may be old and bent with labor, no man will stand taller than you when you say, ‘I marched with Cesar.’" They marched so that these children could have opportunity, not danger. And we have to give it to them.

But let me also say to you, my fellow Americans, I am well aware that we cannot

repair the troubled wounds of this country simply by making ourselves safer on our streets. We must also give our young people more to say yes to. I have worked as hard as I could to turn this economy around, to bring jobs to this country, to bring jobs to this troubled part of our Nation. Southern California now has a higher unemployment rate than any other State. We have got to do better. I know and you know that not only faith and family but work, work is required to organize society, to keep it safe and whole and strong and marching forward.

And so we have made a good beginning. In 10 months more new jobs have come into the private sector than in the previous 4 years but nowhere near enough to put all the people of east Los Angeles to work who want their jobs. We must do better, and we will.

I fought hard and without apology for the North American Free Trade Agreement because I know Mexico is our partner in the future, whether anyone likes it or not, and we have to grow together in strength together. And because I know that no wealthy country on the face of this Earth can create more jobs for its people or higher incomes for people who work harder and smarter unless there are more customers for the products and services the people produce, we have to have those customers. We will find some of them in Mexico and in Chile and in Venezuela and in Colombia and in Argentina and all over Latin America, because we are reaching out to our friends south of our borders again for a great new partnership, for opportunity there and opportunity here in east Los Angeles. It is important.

And you may have seen that I had the leaders of 14 Asian-Pacific nations together in Washington State for the last 2 days. One of them, the President of the Philippines, came to Los Angeles today to go to church with Filipino-Americans in this county. We know that that is the fastest growing part of the world, and they, too, will be our partners in providing jobs for our people. But in the end, we must take care of our own better.

The reason so many working people, the reason so many Hispanic-Americans oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement is that they had seen too many times when the working people of this country worked

harder and harder for less and less security. And so I say to you, we have to have good, decent education not just for these children but for adults throughout their lives so they can always get new jobs. We have to have health care not just for those who can afford it or who are lucky enough to have jobs where it's covered but health care that can never be taken away. Every other advanced country has it. And we must have it here, too.

And we have to have an investment strategy that will help our people everywhere, everywhere, to find the jobs that they deserve. Since I became President, the Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, who is here with me today, has made over a dozen trips to California. I have been here seven times. We are working hard to turn this economy around, not because of some abstract unemployment number but because the faces in this crowd are willing to make America a model of what every society in the world ought to be in the 21st century, where diversity is strength, where diversity is richness and laughter and fullness and hope. Because everybody who works hard, everybody who learns well, everybody who lives by the values that are cherished in this parish has a chance to be rewarded. That, I believe, is God's will for all of us on this Earth, and we must work for it.

Thank you all, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:38 p.m. on the school playground. In his remarks, he referred to Roger Cardinal Mahony, Archbishop of Los Angeles; Father Juan Santillan, parish priest; and Gloria Molina, Los Angeles County commissioner.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines

November 22, 1993

American Airlines Strike

Q. Mr. President, are you willing to intervene in the American Airlines strike?

The President. Well, I'm concerned about it. I've asked the Secretary of Transportation and the Secretary of Labor to look at the situation, and we're looking into it now. But I don't want to raise any false signals.

We're looking into it, we're examining it, and we're looking at all the options. No decision has been made.

Congressional Priorities

Q. Mr. President, what are your priorities now if Congress wraps up before they head home?

The President. Well, as they head home here, I hope the House will pass campaign finance reform today. And I still have a little hope that they can work out their differences over the Brady bill and give it to the American people for a Thanksgiving present. I would like that very much.

Penny-Kasich Amendment

Q. What about the Penny-Kasich—

The President. Well, as you know, I think that's a mistake. I think if it were to pass, if it were to actually become law, it would imperil health care. It would raise the prospect of further defense cuts, which are very unwise. It also sort of heads off the disciplined approach we had planned for next year with the entitlements commission and with the further budget cuts that are scheduled anyway that we still have to make. So I think it would be a mistake.

Q. Were you surprised—

North Korea

Q. Have you ruled out a preemptive strike in North Korea?

The President. I have nothing to say other than what I said at the APEC meeting about that. We're working hard on that issue, and I've consulted with the South Koreans and with the Japanese and with the Chinese at the APEC meeting extensively about that issue.

Brady Bill

Q. Were you surprised that the Brady bill got a new lease on life? And you thought it would happen?

The President. I mean, I think that those who were filibustering it really considered where they were and where the American people were, and they were out of harmony with the American people. The American people want us to act on crime. They want